IN THE CLAIMS:

Kindly rewrite the Claims 1-19, and add new claims 20-21 as follows, in accordance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.121:

1. (Currently amended) An isolated coryneform bacterium having L-glutamine-producing ability, wherein said bacterium has been modified by disrupting or mutating a glutaminase gene on the chromosome so that the glutaminase activity of the bacterium is reduced to 0.1 U/mg of cellular protein or less, wherein said glutaminase gene is selected from the group consisting of:

a) a DNA comprising the DNA sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1, and

b) a DNA which is able to hybridize with the DNA ~~sequence~~ of SEQ ID NO: 1 under stringent conditions of 1 X SSC, 0.1% SDS, at 60°C, and is 95% or more homologous to SEQ ID NO: 1.

2-3. (Canceled).

4. (Previously presented) The bacterium of claim 1, wherein said glutaminase activity is 1/2 or less than glutamine synthetase activity when measured as activity per unit weight of cellular proteins.

5. (Currently amended) The bacterium of claim 1, which is further modified by increasing the expression of a glutamine synthetase gene by increasing the copy number of said glutamine synthetase gene or by replacing a promoter region of said glutamine synthetase gene with a stronger promoter so that said glutamine synthetase activity of the bacterium is enhanced, wherein said glutamine synthetase gene is selected from the group consisting of:

c) a DNA comprising the DNA sequence of SEQ ID NO: 3, and

d) a DNA which is able to hybridize with the DNA ~~sequence~~ of SEQ ID NO: 3 under stringent conditions of 1 X SSC, 0.1% SDS, at 60°C, and is 95% or more homologous to SEQ ID NO: 3, and which encodes a protein which has glutamine synthetase activity.

6-7. (Canceled).

8. (Withdrawn) A method for producing L-glutamine, comprising

a) culturing the bacterium of claim 1 in a medium to produce and accumulate L-glutamine in the medium, and

b) collecting the L-glutamine from the medium.

9. (Withdrawn) A glutamine synthetase gene derived from a coryneform bacterium, wherein the sequence from -35 of the gene is replaced with TTGCCA, and the sequence from -10 of the gene is replaced with TATAAT.

10. (Withdrawn) The glutamine synthetase gene of claim 9, wherein said gene has the DNA sequence of SEQ ID No. 3.

11. (Withdrawn) The glutamine synthetase gene of claim 9, wherein gene encodes a protein having the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID No. 4.

12. (Previously presented) The bacterium of claim 1, wherein said glutaminase gene encodes a protein comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2.

13. (Currently amended) The bacterium of ~~claim 7~~claim 5, wherein said ~~modifying an expression regulatory sequence~~stronger promoter ~~comprises~~is selected from the group consisting of ~~replacing the native promoter with~~ the lac promoter, trp promoter, ~~or~~ and trc promoter.

14. (Previously presented) The bacterium of claim 1, wherein the glutaminase activity of the bacterium is reduced to 0.01 U/mg of cellular protein or less.

15. (Previously presented) The bacterium of claim 14, wherein said glutaminase activity is 1/2 or less than glutamine synthetase activity when measured as activity per unit weight of cellular proteins.

16. (Currently amended) The bacterium of claim 14, which is further modified by increasing the expression of a glutamine synthetase gene by increasing the copy number of said glutamine synthetase gene or by replacing a promoter region of said glutamine synthetase gene with a stronger promoter so that said glutamine synthetase activity of the bacterium is enhanced, wherein said glutamine synthetase gene is selected from the group consisting of:

c) a DNA comprising the DNA sequence of SEQ ID NO: 3, and

d) a DNA which is able to hybridize with the DNA ~~sequence~~ of SEQ ID NO: 3 under stringent conditions of 1 X SSC, 0.1% SDS, at 60°C, and is 95% or more homologous to SEQ ID NO: 3, and which encodes a protein which has glutamine synthetase activity.

17. (Canceled).

18. (Previously presented) The bacterium of claim 14, wherein said glutaminase gene encodes a protein comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2.

19. (Currently amended) The bacterium of ~~claim 17~~claim 16, wherein said ~~modifying an expression regulatory sequence~~stronger promoter ~~comprises~~is selected from

the group consisting of the ~~replacing the native promoter with~~ lac promoter, trp promoter, or trc promoter.

20. (New) The bacterium of claim 1, wherein said glutaminase activity is reduced by disrupting a glutaminase gene on the chromosome.

21. (New) The bacterium of claim 1, wherein said glutaminase activity is reduced by mutating a glutaminase gene on the chromosome.